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witches, they have two or three pythons, it is they who are caught by the poison ordeal.' 'Watching over the country' implies detecting the witches and turning them back, and also reporting them the next morning to the authorities. Particularly 'the defenders' watch over the cows, and they are said actually to increase the milk yield by sucking the milk from the teats and spitting it out again. Mbukile explained this also: ' "The defender" watches over the cows. He takes milk in his mouth and squirts it on the ground; he does not swallow it in his dream. The next day the milk will be plentiful.' A village headman we knew enlarged further on the point: 'If a man is the son of a true village headman and goes to drink the milk of cows, he drinks from the teats, but his python vomits the milk and the next day the owner of the cow will find much milk and say: "He who came last night was the child of a village headman (*ndifumu*). He was good, he was not a witch, no, but a benefactor."[1] So they say. But if a real witch goes to bewitch the cows then the milk dries up altogether for a time. The owners of the cows will milk none for many days. He is a witch indeed.' Similarly, it is held that if witches can be compelled to vomit the human flesh they have eaten, 'to put back the meat', the patient will recover.

'Emptiness' and 'innocence' are associated in several contexts; and vomiting, spitting, and confession (*ukusonya*) are all taken as expressions of good will and repentance. *Ukutema*, for example, means both 'to spit' and 'to forgive', the symbolism being interpreted in this way: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say some day, "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' Blowing water from the mouth is an essential element in prayers to the ancestors, and the close association between them is apparent in the language: *ukuputa* meaning to 'blow out water' and *ukupuuta* (the reflexive form) meaning 'to pray',[2] with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Kasitile, the rainmaker, explained: 'This prayer with water is to confess *everything*. If I do not pray with water then something is left within.'

[1] For a similar concept among the Thonga cf. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 515.

[2] The Zande symbolism is very similar: cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Zande Theology' in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XIX (1936), pp. 11-12.

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are primarily to his kinsmen and fellow villagers, and secondarily to fellow members of his chiefdom; beyond the chiefdom and circle of kinsmen he had, traditionally, no obligations. The Christian definition of 'neighbour' is a much wider one. It is emphasized by the missionaries that the Christian Church is universal, and Nyakyusa Christians themselves are conscious of their unity with, and obligations to, members of other chiefdoms, other cultural groups, and other races. The new sanctions for behaviour operating within the Christian group—the emphasis on Christian duty; the hope of that 'peace which passeth all understanding' and of eternal life; and the fear of suspension or expulsion from the communion of the faithful, and of hell-fire[1]—all these apply to relations beyond, as well as within, the village, the chiefdom, and the circle of kin.

Two other points were mentioned by Christian informants when discussing the differences between pagan and Christian morality: they said that Christian children growing up were liable to be 'proud' (*namatinga*) in their bearing and manner of greeting, because they do not fear 'the breath of men'; and also that Christian men were not afraid to ask many cattle for their daughters at marriage, again because they do not fear their neighbours' disapproval in the way pagans fear it. The implication is that there is less insistence upon conformity to a given code among Christians than among pagans, a greater tolerance of diversity of behaviour.

These differences between pagan and Christian dogma are matched by differences between their ritual. There are no Christian rituals in which the village as a group, distinct from other groups, is concerned. The congregation—the group worshipping in one church—is drawn from many villages, and though devout Christians living in the same neighbourhood often gather for morning and evening prayer, such rituals never include a whole village. Even in a Christian village on mission land only a small proportion of the villagers attend daily prayer regularly. As we have seen, the members of a pagan village meet from time to time to warn off witches, or to bless a repentant wrong-doer (*vide supra*, pp. 101, 109 ff.), but since belief in witchcraft or in 'the curse' is not orthodox among Christians, there is no ritual con-

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), p. 265-90.

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nected with it in a Christian village or village-section. The nearest parallel to the pagan ritual of reconciliation is the formal re-admission of a repentant sinner to the congregation.

The change in belief and ritual tends to weaken village solidarity; for the Christian village is neither a defensive unit, nor is it the group from within which retribution and forgiveness come. A Christian does not feel himself dependent upon village neighbours to the same degree as does a pagan. We argue that the extension of the range of interdependence reduces its intensity in the narrower circles of relationship, and this is evident in the religious as in the economic aspect.[1]

Since the authority of a village headman is largely dependent upon his supposed mystical power, Christians are rarely appointed to this office by the Nyakyusa. We heard of only one Christian headman and he was in the country of a Christian chief. Christians cannot go through the full 'coming out' ceremony which involves treatment with medicines to give *amaanga*, and a Christian headman cannot fulfil the traditional ritual functions in relation to the chief and his ancestors. But in Ngonde, where the percentage of Christians is high (46 per cent as opposed to 15 per cent among the Nyakyusa) and the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, there are a number of Christian headmen who simply abstain from the performance of any pagan rituals (as does the Kyungu himself) leaving them to those headmen who are pagan and feel the ritual to be important. And pagan informants whom we asked about defence against witchcraft in a village in which the headman was a Christian, replied: 'Others will protect the country from witchcraft,' implying that there are always other 'defenders' in a village besides its leader.

In Christian village-sections the same difficulties do not arise, for assistant headmen are never treated at the 'coming out', nor have they ritual functions, other than the formal reproof of supposed witches (*vide supra*, p. 109). Hence the recognised leader of any group of Christians living in a pagan village is normally a Christian. In Christian villages on mission land the leaders are, of course, always Christian. These villages do not participate in any 'coming out' ceremony and the leaders are appointed by the missionary in consultation with the 'session' (i.e. representatives of the congregation), not by the old chief and

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 23-41.

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The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the litter at the coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*).' And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . .' The medicine is to create relationship (*ubukamu*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*ikikolo*). You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my relative (*unkamu gwangu*).'

Another informant (a pagan), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*nkamu gwangu*)." '

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband proclaims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives." ' Kasitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born." ' Mwakionde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water." ' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.'

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is

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CHAPTER VIII

THE PARTICIPANTS

(a) Categories of participants

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THE people who take part in rituals have been referred to repeatedly and now it is possible to define who they are. They fall into four categories: the principals, the minor actors, the congregation, and the officiants or priests. The principals are those who undergo the full ritual lest they go mad; they are always close kin, but what category of kin depends on the type of ritual and the status of the person for whom it is performed. After a death, those who *must* perform the ritual to drive away the shade are the children and grandchildren of the deceased—all of them, the widows and the heir, if a man has died, or, if it is a woman and a senior wife, the widower and her related co-wife if she has one.[1] A man does not perform the ritual for a junior wife or one he has inherited. Children of a related co-wife are treated, for the purposes of ritual, as her own children, and all must undergo the ritual, but only some of the children of other co-wives are selected to perform it. When a man dies the children of the heir perform it, but only some of the children of his other brothers and half-brothers. 'We choose some and leave the others until their own father dies.' The genealogy given on p. 273 to show who performed the ritual on a particular occasion illustrates this. A mother (unless she has been divorced) performs the ritual for all her own children, and the children of a sister who is a co-wife. A divorced woman may come to mourn her dead child at her former husband's homestead but she takes no part in the ritual. 'I, the husband, perform the ritual alone; the woman comes to weep and returns to her new husband. I, the husband, say: "The blood is mine; that bag was bought (*alyokigwa*) with cattle; she was divorced and bought with cattle again."' A man performs the ritual for a son and daughter of each wife, and grandparents perform it for some, but not all, grandchildren.

[1] Probably also the younger sister or brother's daughter who replaces her as a wife, but we have no conclusive evidence on this point.

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Certain siblings perform the ritual, but not all of them. We have referred already to the heir, who is commonly a dead man's younger brother, and who must perform it whether he is a full brother or half-brother, and to a woman's related co-wife who may be either a younger sister or a brother's daughter. The brother or sister 'who followed at the mother's breast', i.e. the sibling immediately younger, must always perform it. Nyakyusa find it very difficult to formulate the rules—there were lively arguments between well-informed people when the question was posed—but these principles emerge from a study of those who actually participated in eight funeral rituals.

Since the funeral ritual is directed to the shades, men can only perform it in the homesteads of their agnatic kinsmen, or of their maternal grandfather or his heir: they can never perform it at the homestead of affines (*kubuko*) for there they are not kinsmen (*abakamu*) but in-laws (*abako*). Hence a husband performs the ritual for his senior wife at his own homestead and her father (or his heir) at his. 'According to custom "the husbands" (*abalume*) perform the ritual, then, when they have done so, she whom we have put in place of the dead comes to us and says: "Fathers, we have performed the ritual, perform it yourselves." ' We never saw a ritual of farewell to a dead woman at her father's house but believe it to be a modified form of the ritual performed at her husband's.

Because of the rules of avoidance, a father-in-law and daughter-in-law cannot, together, go through a ritual which involves the close proximity of the principals. When, therefore, a man performs the death ritual for a son or son's child, he performs it at his own home, and the daughter-in-law concerned does so at her husband's homestead. The widow or parents must begin, and the father or grandparents follow. Thus when Mwandisi's son's son died, the parents of the child first performed the ritual at their home and Mwandisi and his wife then followed at theirs. But in a twin ritual, where participants can be secluded, father-in-law and daughter-in-law may attend the same performance.

A woman can perform a ritual either at her father's or her husband's (as well as at her mother's father's) and she may even perform it according to two different forms, following that of her father's lineage when she is visiting him, and that of her husband's lineage when she is performing it at his homestead.

It is possible that, on the death of a man, his sisters' children

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782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty–marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abako*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
845 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
● 788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *abatasi*, cross-cousins.

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success of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow villagers *must* attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abanyago*) for death, puberty and marriage, and birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older *unyago* by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as *unyago* in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as '*abanyago*' for 'they help the *unyago*', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organize the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognized. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of Chief Porokoto's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as *unganga*, a doctor, but *unyago* is the more precise word since *unganga* has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of reconciliation, no specialist *unyago* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwakionde did in the case quoted) and come very close to organizing a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*umfuya*) representing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

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ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itolo* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikolo* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abako* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

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the case of a Christian who had stayed away from a ritual in his family and 'as soon as he met his relatives he fell sick and coughed like an animal. So they got some of the lees of the beer and gave it to him and he recovered.' A number of Christian kinsmen, leaders in the Church, did not come to the gasping-cough ritual which we attended, but others did come and sipped the beer, or had the lees sent to them at their homes. In the ritual for protection against sorcery which we watched a Christian brother and his wife took part.

And some Christians, though they deny the necessity of many of the pagan rituals for themselves as Christians, still believe them to be necessary to their pagan kinsmen. Hence the anomalous (and to the missionaries the highly unorthodox) position of a woman professing Christianity and acting as officiant in a pagan ritual, as did N. in the death ritual for Kalata's mother (p. 239). N., it will be remembered, came by night. The officiant who performed the ritual for Mwakobela's twins was under instruction as a Christian and was proposing to hand on her medicines to her daughter, a pagan, when she herself was received into the Church. She explained this when Mwakobela (her patient) asked her: 'And what shall we do for twin medicine when you become a Christian?' And we had little doubt that she believed in the efficacy of her medicine for pagans.

Though Christians cannot go through pagan rituals as principals they do not withdraw altogether: they often help their pagan neighbours as grave-diggers at a funeral and in the provision of food for guests at funerals and marriages; and the young men and girls may dance as a separate group, singing their own songs or hymns and ignoring the drums. Sometimes acute rivalry between the two groups of dancers is apparent.

The effect of Christian teaching on pagan ritual is not limited to the partial withdrawal of professing Christians. In those villages most influenced by missions, such as Ilolo, near Rungwe, there is considerable scepticism among pagans, and many of them curtail the rituals in their families, or do not attend them. The Christian view is that 'the pagans see that the Christians disregard the rituals and nothing happens to them, so they begin to ignore them too'. 'Pagans fear much less than they used to do.'

Men who are in European employment either inside or outside the district cannot attend all the rituals. Their case is partially met by keeping the lees of the ritual beer with which to treat them

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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(28) of Mwampondele (27) who had fled from the stool and had died. 643 [764]

The chosen man was secluded in a hut, lying on a litter with his priests, who kept him company (*ukumpanja*), just as a nubile girl is secluded and lies on a litter with her maids, or a young chief with his village headmen at his 'coming out'. Here is the account of Mwasesi, the oldest of the priests of Lubaga (a man of about seventy-five) who saw the installation of the last Lwembe, Mwakisisya (56).

A skin and a head-pad of leaves (*ingata*)[1] are brought by the Kinga. The priests catch the chief and set him on these; and then he cannot run away, it is taboo. I, Mwasesi, would sit on one side of him and my friend on the other, and force him to sit on them. Then we plead with him and say: 'You are the Lion, the Leopard, the Snake, the Banana, the Bean, the Millet, the Cow Pea, and the Lentil.' (Lentils are very important, you know, because it is with them that we celebrate the ritual, and with cow peas.) Then, after a time, he says: 'Leave me', and he goes to find the cow; this cow is just for the priests to eat that night. Then we take him into a certain house, cut leaves and spread them for a litter; and we keep him company there on the litter for some time. Then he sends messages to Mwakyusa (38), to Mwankyuse (33), and to Mwakisambe (30), and the Kinga [i.e. their descendants]. Each chief who is Lwembe's descendant sends commoner priests . . . they gather to induct him into Lubaga, he who was in the house. It is just like the 'coming out' ritual for a young chief. 643 788

The Lwembe in his own person, and in a lesser degree his 'sons' who are ordinary chiefs, are identified with the power of growth. Not only must the Lwembe not die with the breath still in his body, or with his hair and nails still upon it, but when he is chosen the priests test whether his reign will be long or short (perhaps whether they can permit him to live or not) by taking a little millet, putting it in a banana leaf and watching to see whether it sprouts or not. 'If it sprouts and grows at once he will live long; if it does not, he will be the priest [i.e. divine king] but will die very soon.' 643 [787]

Because the power of making rain, food, milk and children lay in the body of the Lwembe he was fearful and terrible. 'No one built close to him, it was taboo, no one touched Mwakisisya (56) . . . if he wished to make it rain he would make it rain all 643 784

[1] The Kinga priests spoke of a cloth to wear and a stool and an axe which were kept in the inner part of the hut of the Lwembe's great wife and which no man, save a priest of Lubaga, might see.

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778 782 Lwembe, and the grove of the first Lwembe himself, the last being the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood. 'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon as the hoes are placed in the grove, or the black bull is killed, then the sick begin to recover.'

[753] [755]

788 Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we heard of five others which occurred during our period of field-work. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and discussed among older men.

The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisisya (56) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grove'; the only one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept office. On the death of Mwakisisya, the Kinga priests ordered that his senior son Mwanjala I (77) should take his place, and when Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother Mwanjala II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests explained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . . 'we feared and stole through the country by night'. . . . And there is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full celebration of the ritual and European administration.

[643] [793] [177]

177 788 The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

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looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens.

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jauer (Mwaisumo), who visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the hoes in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifika*).

Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would flee because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many hoes, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He seized one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga.

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kinga regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*unsololi* or *unkunguluka*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*ukutendekesya umfu*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger presses.

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamakunda (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kissoule in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Jo kyala: ipela sota*). Here Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and *licks* him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks

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anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" '

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains.

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first

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643 778 789 and Mwaipopo and Kisogota smeared it over the tails which were then put out with the horns to dry in the sun. Mwaipopo suggested getting Mwaisyelage, the doctor, to treat them further, and the others agreed saying: 'Let Mwaipopo find someone, that the earth may be good, that it be heavy.' Njobaknea had spoken earlier of the cattle giving much milk after the treatment of the tails. And they went on to discuss the fact that the young chief Mwankuga II (131) had begotten no child by the wife inherited from his elder brother (130) whose place he had taken. Thus the function of the chief in creating plenty and [842] fertility was in the priests' minds, and there may be some link between the virility of the chief and success in war—one informant spoke of the chief's senior wives jumping over the tails immediately after the consummation of their marriage—but of this we are not certain. What is common knowledge is that the tails are 'for seizing cattle', and they are associated with 'manure and blood'. We were told at the conclusion of the ritual: 'Formerly we should have gone tomorrow, after this treating of the tails, to fight.'

Besides medicines for majesty, courage, and popularity as rulers, chiefs use medicines to protect themselves against the fearfulness of the groves in which they sacrifice, medicines to 'close the country to hunger', to make their capitals grand, and to cause thieves who have stolen, to walk round and round until caught.

Medicines are regarded as essential to authority, victory, and successful rule, and the kind used and the dose given are adjusted to the status and character of the individual. 'Village headmen [622] do not drink the most important *ilisigila*; they drink a lesser one, *imbinga*; the senior headman is given most, the junior less.' And the chief's wives do not drink *ilisigila* at all, but only a powder suitable for them. But the use of these medicines has its dangers. The chief, like other people who have been drinking protective medicines, does not eat the new crops grown on fields fertilised [754] by ash without fortifying himself. The danger is said to come from the burnt rubbish heaps, because medicines for defence against witches and sorcerers are burnt in them and, as we have seen, certain of the medicines which the chief uses create a power akin to witchcraft. He tastes the new millet ritually in June, the cow peas in September, and pumpkin leaves in November; and he also [788] tastes the 'new earth' at the break of the rains in October or early November. 'We chiefs fear that the medicines we have drunk will

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turn round in the belly; people say the earth will go bad in us.' 'A child who has drunk medicines will be ill, the smell of the new food or the wet earth goes to the belly.'

The chief eats the first fruits and medicines with the commoner who lies down with him at the commencement of his 'coming out' and 'is his wife to taste with him the first fruits and powdered medicines' and is 'fearful' like the medicines. He is identified with the chief's body and may be compared with the *inthumwa* of the Pondo chief[1] or the *inzile* of the Swazi.[2] His function is to protect the chief against the medicines themselves.

(c) DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Both because of a chief's descent, and because of his use of medicines, mystical power resides in his body.

In the old days a ruling chief was not allowed to die, but was buried while still living, because they feared that if he became unconscious before death he would take away all the food with him, and great hunger would come on us. Men feared *ifwele* medicine in his belly. They said: 'If he dies naturally many of his people will die. . . . He should go alive.' And formerly they buried him with the son of a commoner, also alive, for they said, 'Let him enjoy the company of his man on the road.' When a chief was sick before the coming out of his sons they tried to keep him alive if possible, but if he was clearly going to die then they buried him like this; after the coming out they hastened his death—but only if he were ill. That was why the chiefs fear the 'coming out' of their sons so greatly. Had Mwaipopo lived in the old days and his heir been alive he would have been buried during his last illness.

When a ruling chief was sick the village headmen sent the chief's wives away and looked after him themselves. Then, if they thought he would, or should, die, they tore off all his nails, those of his toes and those of his fingers, and pulled out his hair, and put them in a pot. After that they buried him by night still alive, with a live person, the child of a commoner whom they had seized very secretly. The pot stayed in the house of the senior wife of the chief who had died, and they said, 'It is the chief, we are with him still.' This was the sacred pot for the sacred beer.[3] They kept silence about the death for a month or perhaps two months, saying: 'Let the chief go away first.'

And when a younger brother, a junior chief, died, though he died

[1] M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 330.
[2] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 56.
[3] Kaulilo Kaoly denied this, see infra, p. 69.

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the chief himself. The members of each village co-operate in some measure in cultivation and herding and they form a defensive group against attack 'by day and by night'—i.e. against armed raiders and witches.[1] But there is no great elaboration of ritual for single villages. Such village rituals as occur are connected with defence against witchcraft and involve driving out a supposed witch, or receiving back a member who has fled from fear of witchcraft, or protecting the village fields against witches.[2] Most communal rituals are organized on the basis of the chiefdom or group of chiefdoms, and villages or sections participate as segments of the chiefdom.

The principle of generation and that of section hold one another in check. All those who have 'come out' together have a strong sense of unity as opposed to the generations of their fathers and sons, but every generation is split into two sections each led by an heir of the chief, and these sections have a certain territorial solidarity. It is common in Africa for organized age-groups to cut across kinship and territorial groups. The Nyakyusa peculiarity lies in the territorial unity of age-sets which occupy villages, and the manner in which the fissiparous tendencies within a chiefdom have a constitutional outlet in the rivalry between the sections of a ruling generation which become independent at the 'coming out' of the next generation.

The combination of the hereditary and selective principles of leadership among the Nyakyusa is also somewhat different from that among their neighbours. With many Central African peoples the heir to the holder of the office of village headman or chief is selected, and the most capable member of a given lineage or lineage segment appointed.[3] Among the Nyakyusa succession is precisely defined and there is no selection of a suitable heir except to the supreme and greatly feared office of 'divine king', but the selective principle is given full scope in the 'catching' of leaders for the young men's villages at every 'coming out'. It is this combination of the hereditary and selective principles which binds together chiefs and commoners and successive generations. The rules of

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 44-46, 91-103.

[2] *op. cit.*, pp. 32-4, 103 ff., 134-6, 170-4.

[3] I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual in Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), p. 111; M. G. Marwick, 'The Social Context of Cewa Witch Beliefs', *Africa*, xxii (1952), pp. 215-33; V. Turner, 'Ritual Village Structure', *Africa*, xxv (1955), pp. 158-61; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), pp. 137-63.